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USIB-D-29.1/9  
27 August 1974  
Limited Distribution

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Revitalizing the Watch Committee

1. The attached memorandum on the subject from General Graham is circulated for Board consideration of his proposal to establish an ad hoc community committee to consider the options for revamping the Watch Committee/NIC mechanism and streamlining the strategic warning process.

USIB ACTION REQUESTED

2. Board members are requested to advise the Secretariat by close of business 6 September of their concurrence or other views on General Graham's proposal in paragraph 3 of the attachment.

[Redacted Signature]

Executive Secretary

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Attachment

cc: Acting Chairman, Watch Committee

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Revitalizing the Watch Committee

This memorandum suggests that the existing Watch Committee machinery is anachronistic and needs an overhaul. We propose that an ad hoc Community committee be formed to consider the alternatives.

1. Over the past few months, under the direction of the Acting Chairman of the Watch Committee (the Director of Current Intelligence in CIA), the Office of Current Intelligence has conducted a study of the existing Watch Committee/National Indications Center mechanism and the warning functions which it and other elements of the Community are charged with performing. Several tentative proposals for improving the warning process emerged from this study and have been discussed at some length with my staff. The DCI has now asked us to discuss the matter further with representatives of the Community, so that formal proposals can be submitted to USIB.

2. Those who have examined the problem to date have sorted it out along the following lines:

A. In terms of national intelligence, there are two distinct kinds of warning:

(1) Strategic Warning--a concept which deals with signs of an impending military attack on the United States and its overseas bases;

(2) Warning of impending lesser wars or other important international events of potentially significant interest to US policymakers.

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B. The Watch Committee/National Indications Center mechanism, originally established to deal with the first kind of warning, has been pushed more and more into the second kind, and this has diverted it from its main mission. Moreover, it has been overtaken by recent technological and organizational developments, and may not be capable of using [redacted], for which one of the major justifications is Strategic Warning.

C. The existing Watch Committee/NIC mechanism probably ought to be modified so that the effort is re-directed toward the Strategic Warning problem and the search for indicators is conducted on a daily basis, attuned, inter alia, [redacted]. The staff needed to support this specific function could be much smaller than the existing NIC Staff.

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D. The other type of warning probably ought to be handled by the on-going mechanisms of current intelligence for routine daily and weekly reporting, perhaps supplemented by new forms of inter-agency communications and new ways to alert national consumers of particular problems they might soon confront. In regard to the latter, the DCI is circulating to USIB for discussion a proposal for an "Alerting Memorandum".

3. I propose the establishment of an ad hoc Community committee to consider the options for revamping the Watch Committee/NIC mechanism and streamlining the strategic warning process. With your concurrence, I will issue invitations to a meeting of such a committee which will be convened in the near future under the chairmanship of a member of my staff and which will make recommendations to USIB.

[redacted]

Daniel O. Graham  
Lieutenant General, USA  
D/DCI/IC

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